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NIGHT LEAD POWERS

BY CARDNER L. BRIDGE

WASHINGTON, MARCH 5 (AP)—U2 PILOT FRANCIS GARY POWERS WILL TELL HIS STORY IN PUBLIC TOMORROW FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HE WAS CONVICTED IN MOSCOW OF BEING AN AMERICAN SPY.

CHAIRMAN RICHARD B. RUSSELL, D-CA., ANNOUNCED TODAY THE 32-YEAR-OLD FLIER WILL APPEAR AT 2 P.M. EST TOMORROW AT AN OPEN SESSION OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE.

IT WILL BE POWERS' FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE HE WAS FLOWN BACK TO THIS COUNTRY AFTER BEING RELEASED ON FEB. 10 IN EXCHANGE FOR THE SOVIET SPY RUDOLF I. ABEL. THE RUSSIANS HAD SENTENCED HIM TO 10 YEARS; ABEL WAS SERVING A 30-YEAR TERM.

THE DECISION TO QUESTION POWERS AT AN OPEN SESSION WAS ANNOUNCED AFTER A 1 1/2-HOUR CLOSED BRIEFING BY CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR JOHN A. MCCONE BEFORE TWO SENATE SUBCOMMITTEES.

MCCONE WAS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD THESE GROUPS HE IS SATISFIED WITH POWERS' STORY AND FEELS THE FLIER SHOULD NOT BE CRITICIZED FOR WHAT HAPPENED WHEN HIS HIGH-FLYING RECONNAISSANCE PLANE WAS DOWN DEEP INSIDE RUSSIA ON MAY 1, 1960.

SOME SENATORS WHO ATTENDED THE BRIEFING TOLD NEWSMEN THEY FELT POWERS HAD BEEN CRITICIZED UNFAIRLY BY PERSONS WHO DID NOT KNOW THE FACTS, AND THAT IT WOULD BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS OF POWERS HIMSELF TO GIVE A PUBLIC ACCOUNTING.

THERE HAVE BEEN COMPLAINTS AMONG SOME MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THAT POWERS SHOULD HAVE DESTROYED THE PLANE BEFORE BAILING OUT. AS IT WAS THE PLANE AND ITS EQUIPMENT WERE RECOVERED VIRTUALLY INTACT BY THE RUSSIANS.

JUST WHAT IT WAS THAT KNOCKED THE PLANE OUT OF THE SKIES HAS NEVER BEEN MADE CLEAR. POWERS REFUSED TO SAY AT HIS MOSCOW TRIAL THAT HIS CRAFT HAD BEEN HIT BY A ROCKET AT 68,000 FEET. HE CONCEDED HE FELT AN EXPLOSION WHILE AT THIS ALTITUDE BUT SAID HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT IT WAS.

"AS I WAS TUMBLING THROUGH SPACE AT ABOUT 33,000 FEET," HE TESTIFIED, "I COULD NOT USE THE EJECTION SEAT, SO I OPENED THE CANOPY" AND JUMPED OUT.

THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE SAID A CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY STATEMENT ON THE CASE WILL BE MADE PUBLIC AT NOON TOMORROW, TWO HOURS BEFORE POWERS STARTS HIS TESTIMONY.

THE CIA HAS BEEN QUESTIONING POWERS AT SECRET HIDEAWAYS SINCE HIS RETURN TO THIS COUNTRY. BUT THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY NEVER HAS ACKNOWLEDGED POWERS WAS THERE. THE WHITE HOUSE HAS SAID THE PILOT'S 2,500 DOLLARS-A-MONTH SALARY WAS BEING PAID FROM GOVERNMENT FUNDS BUT WOULD NOT SPECIFY WHERE THEY CAME FROM.

ONCE SOURCE SAID POWERS HAD SUCCESSFULLY UNDERGONE LIE DETECTOR TESTS. THAT INDIVIDUAL WHO DECLINED TO BE QUOTED BY NAME, SAID THAT SINCE NOW UNDERSTANDS IT, POWERS' STORY THAT HIS PLANE WAS KNOCKED DOWN BY "A NEARLY CERTAIN RUSSIAN ROCKET."

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THIS IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN THE FIRST ATTEMPT TO KNOCK THE AIRCRAFT OUT OF THE SKY.

AND SENT IT PITCHING SO VIOLENTLY EARTHWARD THAT THE PILOT WAS UNABLE TO ACTIVATE SELF-DESTRUCTION DEVICES.

THE RUSSIANS CLAIMED THEY BLEW IT OUT OF THE SKIES WITH A NEW TYPE ROCKET, BUT U.S. MILITARY EXPERTS HAVE EXPRESSED DOUBT THE SOVIETS HAD A ROCKET IN MAY 1960 THAT WOULD BE EFFECTIVE AS SUCH HIGH ALTITUDE.

A SPECIAL BOARD OF INQUIRY HEADED BY RETIRED FEDERAL JUDGE E. BARRETT PRETTYMAN IS REPORTED TO HAVE DECIDED THAT POWERS CONDUCTED HIMSELF REASONABLY WELL IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO THROW MUCH LIGHT ON WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS PLANE.

ONE OF THE SENATORS WHO HEARD MCCONE'S REPORT, SEN. JOHN STENNIS, D-MASS., TOLD REPORTERS "IT SEEMS MR. POWERS LIVED UP TO HIS CONTRACT." STENNIS DECLINED TO ELABORATE.

THE QUESTION OF WHETHER

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